

Quote of the Week: Don't worry I didn't forget a quote of the week this week, but it is really long...but it's very good, so I decided to put it at the bottom on this missive, so scroll down!

We're Baaaack: Last Wednesday, both Houses of Congress returned to Washington for the second session of the 111th Congress. So, your life, liberty, and property are once again in jeopardy. You haven't heard from me for a while over the holidays, but I will make up for that soon. This is the first of 4 laptops I will send you over the course of the next week. Today I want to give you a little flavor of what people in California have been telling and asking me during the roughly 4 weeks that I was home. Tomorrow, I'll do a quick review of where many pending issues are right now. On Wednesday, the President will give his first State of the Union address (although it is his 3rd address to a joint session of Congress in 12 months) and I'll provide you with the insider's view the next day. Then on Friday, Republican House members (including this one) will be at our annual retreat, which is in Baltimore, Maryland this year. The President has accepted an invitation to speak to us, and I have no idea what he is going to say. I will report to you on what he said and how it was received after the speech.

So, back to the present. I always see a lot of people when I'm home in Orange County. Whether it's at some formal speaking engagement, at a party, or it may just be someone who comes up to me while I'm filling up at a gas station or getting a cup of coffee. These people will be reflective of the demographic makeup of the nation as a whole, in that most will be Republicans, but many are Independents, Democrats or Libertarians. There were two consistent themes that came from the vast majority of the people with whom I spoke, regardless of party affiliation.

First, almost everyone wanted to know what the prospects were for the Health care bill, and if there was still a chance that we could kill it. At the time, I responded that yes there was a chance because the House and Senate bills were quite different and the Senate bill could not pass in the House, and the House bill could not pass in the Senate, so there was still doubt as to what could pass both Houses. Not to mention, the public reception to both bills was growing more toxic by the day.

Little did I know just how toxic it was. Then last week, the election of Scott Brown in Massachusetts took what was a difficult task for Democrats and made it nearly impossible. It is not just that they lost the 60th vote in the Senate. The larger effect is that arguably the most liberal state in the union just sent a resounding message that they do not want more costly and inefficient government-run medicine. This has to make many Democrats, who thought they were "safe," reconsider whether they want to oppose their constituency by voting for socialized medicine again.

Right now, it is unclear where this will go. Speaker Pelosi admitted on Thursday that she did not have the votes to pass the Senate health care bill in the House. Right now, Democrats are all over the place on what they should do now. Some want to drop healthcare altogether while others still want to try to put something together like the bills they had before. Still others want to use the "reconciliation process" which would mean that while only 51 votes would be required in the Senate, but that means that the whole process would have to be started from scratch again in the House. Yet another faction would like to pass a much less ambitious bill that leaves the current system intact and tries to make only those changes on which a bipartisan consensus exists. Take for example plan portability, and no termination for pre-existing conditions. We will see on Wednesday which path the President prefers.

The other comment I received from almost everyone was "why are things so partisan back there? Can't you guys agree on anything?" This level of partisanship is not typical. This is the worst I have seen in my 10 years in public life. The reason is simple. Democrats won historic majorities in the 2008 elections and have a very liberal person in the White House. Neither party has had this kind of control since the 70s (Jimmy Carter) and neither is likely to see this kind of control again for some time. So, Democratic leadership believes that they have a small window in which to accomplish the things they have been unable to do for decades. Furthermore, they believe that the public gave them this mandate in the 2008 elections. Much of this feeling was reflected early last year when Republican Whip Eric Cantor (R-VA) was invited to the White House to present Republican ideas for a stimulus package. Congressman Cantor asked the President why he rejected all Republican ideas and was answered with the quip "I won." So, on the whole, they have moved forward on almost all major policy initiatives this Congress without consultation with, input from, or any votes of any Republicans in either House, with few exceptions.

I do think this will begin to change now. Elections in Virginia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts have sent a clear message to Democrats that the public does not like their agenda. Not everyone here gets it, but many do. There are obvious places to go on many issues where broad bipartisan consensus can be achieved. But as with health care, Democrats are not of one mind on this, and many still want to push everything to the far left, even if they suffer consequences at the ballot box this November. As I mentioned earlier, we may get some clue by the tone and message coming from the President this week.

Quote of the Week: "I quit when medicine was placed under State control, some years ago," said Dr. Hendricks. "Do you know what it takes to perform a brain operation? Do you know the kind of skill it demands, and the years of passionate, merciless, excruciating devotion that go to acquire that skill? That was what I would not place at the disposal of men whose sole qualification to rule me was their capacity to spout the fraudulent generalities that got them elected to the privilege of enforcing their wishes at the point of a gun. I would not let them

dictate the purpose for which my years of study had been spent, or the conditions of my work, or my choice of patients, or the amount of my reward. I observed that in all the discussions that preceded the enslavement of medicine, men discussed everything - except the desires of the doctors. Men considered only the 'welfare' of the patients, with no thought for those who were to provide it. That a doctor should have any right, desire or choice in the matter was regarded as irrelevant selfishness; his is not to choose, they said, only 'to serve.' That a man who's willing to work under compulsion is too dangerous a brute to entrust with a job in the stockyards - never occurred to those who proposed to help the sick by making life impossible for the healthy. I have often wondered at the smugness with which people assert their right to enslave me, to control my work, to force my will, to violate my conscience, to stifle my mind - yet what is it that they expect to depend on, when they lie on an operating table under my hands? Their moral code has taught them to believe that it is safe to rely on the virtue of their victims. Well, that is the virtue I have withdrawn. Let them discover the kind of doctors that their system will now produce. Let them discover, in their operating rooms and hospital wards, that it is not safe to place their lives in the hands of a man whose life they have throttled. It is not safe, if he is the sort of a man who resents it - and still less safe, if he is the sort who doesn't."

Atlas Shrugged

by Ayn Rand

Until tomorrow, I remain respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Campbell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Campbell" clearly distinguishable.

Congressman John Campbell
Member of Congress